

Message Text

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PAGE 01 COTONO 00980 100844Z
ACTION AF-10

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FOR AF/W

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PDIP, DM
SUBJ: PRESIDENT KEREKOU'S INDEPENDENCE DAY MESSAGE TO
PRESIDENT CARTER

1. JULY 6 ISSUE OF SEMI-OFFICIAL DAILY EHUZU PRINTED
FOLLOWING TEXT OF MESSAGE SENT BY BENIN PRESIDENT MATHIEU
KEREKOU TO PRESIDENT JIMMY CARTER:

" EXCELLENCY, ON THE OCCASION OF THE CELEBRATION OF
THE NATIONAL HOLIDAY OF YOUR COUNTRY, THE UNITED STATES
OF AMERICA, IT PLEASES US PARTICULARLY TO SEND YOU IN THE NAME
OF THE BENINESE PEOPLE, THE MILITARY REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT,
AND IN OUR OWN NAME OUR WARM AND SINCERE CONGRATULATIONS.
THIS HAPPY OCCASION PERMITS THE BENINESE PEOPLE AND ITS
REVOLUTIONARY MILITARY GOVERNMENT TO APPRECIATE AT THEIR
TRUE VALUE THE FRIENDSHIP AND THE RELATIONS OF FREE COOPER-
ATION WHICH EXIST BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES AND OUR TWO
PEOPLES. THUS WE ARE CONVINCED THAT THIS FRUITFUL
COOPERATION WILL CONTINUE TO DEVELOP IN ALL AREAS FOR
THE WELLBEING OF OUR RESPECTIVE POPULATIONS AND FOR
THE CONSOLIDATION OF NATIONAL SOLIDARITY. IN REPEATING
OUR SINCERE CONGRATULATIONS WE ASK, YOUR EXCELLENCY, TO
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RECEIVE OUR BEST WISHES FOR YOUR HEALTH AND GOOD FORTUNE
AND PROSPERITY FOR THE HARD-WORKING AMERICAN PEOPLE. WITH
HIGHEST CONSIDERATIONS. /S/ MATHIEU KEREKOU."

2. COMMENT: A MESSAGE OF THIS DEGREE OF WARMTH AND
CORDIALITY TO PRESIDENT CARTER IS, TO SAY THE LEAST,
UNEXPECTED, GIVEN THE HISTORY OF OUR RELATIONS OVER THE

PAST FOUR YEARS. MESSAGE WAS PARTICULARLY SURPRISING SINCE THERE WAS ACTIVE BOYCOTT BY BENINESE OF CHARGE'S FOURTH OF JULY RECEPTION WHERE HIGHEST RANKING OFFICIAL WAS CHIEF OF PROTOCOL AND CONSULAR AFFAIRS REPRESENTING FOREIGN MINISTER. ONLY OTHER BENINESE ATTENDING WERE HANDFULL OF WORKING-LEVEL BUREAUCRATS, CIVIL SERVANTS, AND EMBASSY LOCAL EMPLOYEES.

3. DURING CALL BY CHARGE ON PROTOCOL AND CONSULAR AFFAIRS CHIEF PAQUI JULY 6, PAQUI EXPRESSED REGRET AT CHARGE'S IMMINENT DEPARTURE AND HOPED THAT HE WOULD TAKE AWAY SOME PLEASANT MEMORIES OF BENIN. PAQUI ADMITTED THAT BENINESE GOVERNMENT HAD NOT ALWAYS MADE CHARGE'S TASK PARTICULARLY EASY, BUT SAID HE HOPED CHARGE WOULD UNDERSTAND GROWING PAINS OF A REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT. HE SAID THAT IN HIS VIEW, FOREIGN POWERS CURRENTLY ACTIVE IN BENIN WOULD NOT STAY FOREVER AND THE U.S. SHOULD BEAR THIS IN MIND.

4. SPEAKING LESS OBLIQUELY, PAQUI SAID THAT PRESIDENT KEREKOU'S JULY 4 MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT CARTER WAS, IN FACT, A SIGN TO THE U. S. THAT BENIN WOULD LIKE TO HAVE A RESIDENT AMBASSADOR ONCE AGAIN. HE SAID THAT THE U.S. IS TOO IMPORTANT A COUNTRY NOT TO HAVE AMBASSADORIAL REPRESENTATION THROUGHOUT THE THIRD WORLD. CHARGE RESPONDED THAT SINCE AMBASSADORS WERE ENVOYS OF THE PRESIDENT, ANY DECISION IN THIS AREA WOULD HAVE TO BE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MADE IN WASHINGTON.

5. IN VIEW OF KEREKOU'S MESSAGE AND PAQUI'S CONFIRMATION THAT IT IS LINKED TO BENIN'S PERENNIAL DESIRE TO HAVE AN AMBASSADOR, BELIEVE DEPARTMENT CAN EXPECT DEMARCHE ALONG THESE LINES FROM BENINESE DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIVES IN WASHINGTON.

6. IF QUESTION IS RAISED, THIS MIGHT BE APPROPRIATE OPPORTUNITY TO OPEN POSSIBILITY OF ACCREDITING A NON-RESIDENT AMBASSADOR WHILE KEEPING THE EMBASSY AT PERMANENT CHARGE LEVEL TO HANDLE DAY-TO-DAY AFFAIRS. THOMPSON

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